

**West Hartford Fire Department  
Office of the Fire Marshal**

February 22, 2012

Senate Bill 102

Members of the Committee on Planning and Development,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding Senate Bill 102. My name is Michael Sinsigalli. I am an Assistant Chief with the West Hartford Fire Department where I head the Fire Prevention Division. I would also like to disclose to you that, while I am not here in that capacity, I am a member of the State Codes and Standards Committee. I am not speaking today as a member of the Codes and Standards Committee and my testimony, in no way reflects that of the Committee. I am here solely as a representative of my community.

I wish to express my opposition to Senate Bill 102.

In part, Senate Bill 102 modifies General Statutes Section 8-2 and takes away a very important right that is granted to a municipality to adopt zoning regulations that **"secure safety from fire, panic, flood and other dangers"**. The proposed modification to this Section would prohibit the municipality from enacting zoning regulations to accomplish its obligations granted throughout subsection (a) of the Statute. This Bill would also cause a great many provisions in zoning regulations to be called into question because they could be considered **"a building code or construction standard other than those contained in the State Building Code"**. These provisions would include side yard requirements, exterior sheathing requirements, building density and yes, fire protection provisions such as fire hydrants, cisterns and sprinkler systems.

Senate Bill 102 also would take away a very important tool that I have when asked to approve reduced side yard requirements for residential sub-divisions, extended rear-lot sub-divisions, and developments in low water service areas. I have used residential sprinkler systems to provide an acceptable level of protection where my only recourse would be to recommend the denial of the applications and my Town's zoning officials take fire department recommendations seriously.

Senate Bill 102 will remove another important municipal right. That is the right to manage and shape its future. We are in a new economy the likes of which we have never seen. All municipalities are faced with intense economic challenges. Tax revenues as well as state and federal contributions are shrinking. We must not only meet our current fiscal crisis but we must manage our cost of providing services in the future. We can begin to manage future drains on our public safety systems by building for a safer future. Municipalities may look towards its zoning regulations to manage future fire protection costs.

I am asking that Senate Bill 102 not be passed. It's sole purpose is to prevent local municipalities from enacting zoning regulations that would require residential sprinklers for sub-divisions. But, it's broad scope and vague language will be used to argue any zoning provisions that can be remotely tied to a provision of the building code. While we may argue here that it is not the intent, that intent is not clear in the bill and will not even be considered in zoning litigation five years from now.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Sinsigalli  
Assistant Fire Chief  
West Hartford Fire Department